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CONGRESSMAN
PATRICK J. KENNEDY
FIRST DISTRICT — RHODE ISLAND

NEWS RELEASE

1505 Longworth House Office Building • Washington, D.C. 20515-3901 • (202) 225-4911
District Office • 286 Main Street • Pawtucket, RI 02860 • (401) 729-5600

KENNEDY URGES PRESIDENT CLINTON, INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR TO CONDEMN MILITARY REPRESSION IN EAST TIMOR

Congressman speaks out upon return from troubled former Portuguese colony

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For additional information, contact:
Larry Berman (401) 729-5600

WASHINGTON -- Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy (D-RI), upon his return from a visit to East Timor, has expressed his outrage at the post-Christmas military repression in the troubled land under Indonesian rule.

In letters today to President Clinton and J. Stapleton Roy, the U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia, Kennedy has called upon the United States government to respond to roundups by security forces which have continued in the days after a Christmas Eve Mass celebrated by Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize winner. Kennedy was in attendance at the Mass, where a Timorese member of the Indonesia military forces was killed.

Kennedy said he has learned that individuals wearing shirts commemorating Bishop Belo's receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize have been targeted for attack.

"It is a savage irony that silent support for a man of peace, their Bishop, should result in brutal violence," wrote Kennedy. "It is imperative that the United States use all diplomatic means available to express its concern over the latest violence in East Timor.

"This latest instance of violence against the people of East Timor requires an immediate response from the U.S. government," Kennedy continued. "It must be made unmistakably clear to Jakarta that the United States will not countenance the terrorization of the people of East Timor. This new outbreak of violence must be condemned and stopped."

Kennedy also condemned the latest violence in a separate letter today to Indonesian President Socharto.